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## THE CELTIC ORIGIN OF THE LAY OF YONEC.<sup>1</sup>

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The lay of *Yonec*, attributed to Marie de France, was written during the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> The story may be briefly summarized as follows:

A rich old man, "avuez" of Caruënt and lord of the surrounding country, marries a beautiful lady of high estate. Out of jealousy he confines her in a tower, and sets his sister, an old widow, "pur li tenir plus en justise" (v. 36). For seven years he waits in vain for an heir.

One day while the wife is bemoaning her fate and wishing for a lover, a large hawk enters the window of her prison, and alighting before her becomes a handsome knight. He tells her that he has long loved her, and her alone, but that he could not have come unless she had desired him. In order to prove that he is not an evil spirit he assumes the lady's form and takes the sacrament. He then becomes her lover and promises to be with her whenever she desires, but predicts that if their love is discovered, he must die. He then departs as he came. His name is Muldumarec.

The lover continues to visit the lady until the two are discovered together by the old woman. The latter reports the matter to the husband, who has sharp, forked irons fixed in the window. By these Muldumarec on his next visit is mortally wounded. On entering the room he reminds his mistress of his prediction regarding the fatal outcome of their love, but comforts her with the assurance that she will bear a son who will be "pruz e vaillant" (v. 332) and will avenge his father's death. The child shall be called Yonec. Muldumarec now departs.

After the disappearance of the bird-man the lady jumps from

<sup>1</sup> This study in a more extended form appeared in 1910 in the *Revue Celtique*, XXXI, p. 413 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The poem has been edited by Roquefort, *Poésies de Marie de France*, I, Paris, 1819, p. 272 ff., and by Karl Warnke, *Die Lais der Marie de France*, [first edn., 1885], 2d. edn., Halle, 1900, p. 123 ff. The following discussion is based on the text of the latest edition.

a window twenty feet above the ground. Following her lover by the blood-stains, she passes through an entrance in a hill-side, and emerges "en un mult bel pre" (v. 360), where she sees a beautiful city. She enters, but, finding no one inside, she goes into the palace, where she discovers her dying lover reclining on a gorgeous bed in a chamber illuminated by candles and chandeliers which burn day and night.

Muldumarec gives the lady a ring which will cause her husband to forget her short-comings, and entrusts her with a sword which she is to bestow upon no one but their son. When the child shall have attained to manhood, she is to accompany him and her husband to "une feste u ele irra" (v. 431).

"En une abeïe vendrunt;  
par une tombe qu'il verrunt  
orrunt renover sa mort." (v. 433 ff.)

On this occasion the son is to receive the sword. Having received these instructions, the lady departs with the sword and ring, and returns home as she came, on the way hearing the bells of the city toll for her lover's death.

Muldumarec's prediction is fulfilled. The son is born, and in due time is dubbed knight. In company with his mother and her husband he at length sets out to attend the feast of St. Aaron at Caerleon. On the journey the three are guided to an exceedingly fair castle.

"Une abeïe aveit dedenz  
de mult religiüses genz." (v. 487 f.)

Here the travelers see a tomb which they learn is that of the king of the country, who was killed for the love of a lady at Caruënt. The mother now gives Yonec the sword and tells him the story of his birth. She thereupon falls dead on her lover's tomb, and the son, after cutting off her husband's head, ascends the throne of his father.

*Yonec* belongs to the group of mediaeval poems known as Breton lays; that is, it claims descent from Celtic tradition. Though the term Breton Lay was doubtless applied originally

only to those poems based on Celtic lore, the popularity of genuine Breton Lays seems to have induced certain poets to claim attention for their work by ascribing to the Celts stories which had nothing Celtic about them. However this may be, it is well known that the title Breton Lay does not of itself prove Celtic origin. Nevertheless, in the absence of direct evidence pointing elsewhere, it is our duty to give the Celtic hypothesis a chance to establish its claims, both on account of the claim itself and because Celtic tradition offered to the mediaeval poets of England and France one of the most easily accessible popular sources from which to draw the materials of romantic fiction.

Although the localization of the events of *Yonec* on Celtic soil has been noted,<sup>3</sup> and several Celtic analogues (including episodes from the Irish *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>3</sup> According to Gaston Paris (*Romania*, VIII (1879), p. 34), Caerüent is probably the ancient *Venta Silurium*, in Monmouthshire (cf. Warnke, *Die Lais*, p. 232). Zimmer (*Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, I (1890), p. 800, n. 1) seems to prefer this explanation, but suggests also *Venta Belgarum* = *Caer Went* = *Wintonia* = Winchester.

The river Duëlas, on which Caerüent is said to have stood, has not been identified (cf. Bédier, *Revue des deux Mondes*, vol. 107 (1891), p. 848). It may represent a Celtic *Dubglas* (Blackish-blue), the name of some stream which has disappeared (cf. Warnke, *Die Lais*, p. 232; Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 2d. edn., Stuttgart, 1900, p. 379).

The mention of Carlion (Caerleon) and of St. Aaron also speak strongly for the origin of the story on Celtic soil (F. Lot, *Romania*, XXIV (1895), p. 520; cf. *Romania*, XXV (1896), p. 32; Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 1900, p. 381; but see Ahlström, *Studier i den fornfranska Laislitteraturen*, Upsala, 1892, p. 13 ff.).

Warnke (*Die Lais*, p. 232) notes that "*Yonec*, aus *Ywonec*, ist das bretonische, *Ionet* (which is also found in the MSS), das französische Deminutivum des bei den Bretonen beliebten *Iwon* = Iwein." Cf. Lot, *Romania*, XXV (1896), p. 1; Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 1900, p. 378. According to Rhys, the name goes back to an ancient Celtic *Esugenos* (*Hibbert Lectures* for 1886, London, 1888, p. 63, n. 2.).

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Nutt, *Folk-Lore*, II (1891), p. 87 ff.; *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 56, n. 1. Cf. Miss Edith Rickert, *Marie de France, Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 186; Reinhold Koehler, in Warnke's *Die Lais*, 1900, p. CXXVI; E. Freymond in Vollmöller's *Kritischer Jahresbericht*, III (1891-4), 2, Erlangen, 1897, p. 167.

*Tochmarc Étaíne*<sup>5</sup> and the Welsh *Mabinogi* of *Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*)<sup>6</sup> have been more or less discussed, no thoroughgoing examination of the Celtic parallels to the leading features of the story has, so far as I know, ever been made. The purpose of the present investigation is to attempt to ascertain how far the most important elements in Marie's poem can be accounted for in Celtic tales preserved in forms which date from a period earlier than that at which Marie wrote.

THE SHAPE-SHIFTING FAIRY LOVER.

That male supernatural beings sometimes form alliances with mortal women was well believed among the ancient Celts. Of the Gauls St. Augustine in his treatise *De Civitate Dei*<sup>6</sup> writes: "Creberrima fama est multique se expertos, vel ab eis qui experti essent, de quorum fide dubitandum non est, audisse confirmant, Silvanos, et Faunos, quos vulgo incubos vocant, improbos saepe existisse mulieribus, et earum appetisse ac peregissee concubitum; et quosdam daemones, quos Dusios Galli nuncupant, hanc assidue immunditiam et tentare et efficere, plures talesque asseverant, ut hoc negare impudentiae videatur." That a similar belief prevailed among the Irish is amply attested in early Goidelic literature.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Miss Edith Rickert, *loc. cit.* Cf. Pietro Toldo, *Romanische Forschungen*, XVI (1903-4), p. 609 f.; Oliver M. Johnston, *Publs. Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XX (1905), p. 322 ff. See also *Studi medievali*, II (1906), p. 1 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Liber* XV, cap. XXIII (Migne, *Patrologiae*, vol. XLI, col. 468).

<sup>7</sup> An example of the rationalized fairy lover is found in the *Tain Bó Fraich* (Cattle Raid of Froech). Strachan (*Philol. Soc. Trans.*, (1895-98), p. 97, n. 2) regards the *Tain Bó Fraich* as "perhaps the most archaic of the longer sagas", and in his discussion of "The Deponent Verb in Irish" (*op. cit.*, vol. for 1891-94, pp. 495, 555), he places it on linguistic grounds in a group of tales which may be regarded as more or less exact copies of texts written down in the ninth century, or earlier. For editions see *Publications of the Royal Ir. Acad.*, Irish MSS Series I, pt. I (1870) p. 134 ff.; *Revue Celtique*, XXIV (1903), p. 127 ff. See also J. T. Gilbert, *Facs. of Nat'l MSS of Ireland*, II (1878), XXXV ff.; O'Curry *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, III (1873), p. 218 ff.; Thurneysen, *Sagen aus dem alten Irland*, Berlin, 1901, p. 116 ff.; A. H. Leahy,

The *Dinnshenchus* is an Irish document consisting of a collection of passages written for the most part in both prose and verse, and giving traditional explanations of various place names connected with the legendary history of Ireland. The versified portions probably go back to the ninth or tenth century, and may contain material of much greater antiquity.<sup>8</sup> In one of these poems, found in a well known Irish manuscript called the *Bók of Leinster*, dating from about the middle of the twelfth century, we learn that Aed, son of the Dagda, one of the most famous of the Irish supernatural beings, committed adultery with the wife of Corrcend, and was slain by the aggrieved husband.<sup>9</sup> In another affair, described in the fourteenth century

*Heroic Romances of Ireland*, II, London (1906), p. 6 ff. See further *Agallamh na Senorach* (*Silva Gadelica*, ed. S. H. O'Grady, II, p. 260; *Irische Texte*, IV, I, p. 260 f.).

In some cases the woman herself belongs to the family of the immortals. For example, Oengus, mac ind Oc, one of the most important supernatural beings of the early Irish, was the illegitimate son of the great Dagda and the wife of Elcmar, another fairy king (*Zeitschrift für celtische Philol.*, V (1904), p. 527). In one of the *Dinnshenchus* poems the Dagda is said to have bestowed his attentions on a fairy woman named Boand (*Publications of the Royal Irish Acad.*, Todd Lect. Ser., IX, p. 18 f.), and in an extraordinary story found in the *Agallamh na Senorach* (*Silva Gadelica*, II, p. 196 f.) we read that Manannán mac Lir fell in love with the sister of a warrior of the Tuatha Dé Danann, and succeeded in winning her for his own.

Muldumarec is by no means the only example of the supernatural lover in mediaeval romance. Caradoc, the hero of a long section of *Perceval* (ed. Potvin, v. 12, 451 ff.), is the son of a supernatural father and a mortal mother. The latter, after the birth of Caradoc, is shut up by her husband in a "tor de perrine" (v. 12, 936), where she is visited by her lover, who is finally captured, and punished. See also the lay of *Tydorel* (*Rom.*, VIII (1879), p. 67 ff.); *Sir Orfeo* (ed. O. Zielke, Breslau, 1880); *Sir Gowther* (ed. Karl Breul, Oppeln, 1886); and the story of Uther and Igerne (*Kittredge, Amer. Journal of Philol.*, VII (1886), pp. 2, 3 and n. 4); J. W. Beach, *The Loathly Lady* (unpublished Harvard diss'n., 1907), chap. V, p. 72 ff. See further infra, n. 93.

<sup>8</sup> On the age of the material contained in the *Dinnshenchus*, see infra, p. 32 and n. 16.

<sup>9</sup> *Publications of the Royal Irish Academy*, Todd Lecture Series, VII (1900), p. 42 f.; cf. *Revue Celtique*, XVI (1895), p. 42.

*Book of Ballymote*, Bennan mac Brec for a similar offense killed Ibel,<sup>10</sup> son of Manannán mac Lir,<sup>11</sup> another well known prince of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*,<sup>12</sup> or fairy people of Ireland.

The supernatural lover who shifts his shape in order to visit his mistress figures in the *Compert Mongain* (Birth of Mongan), the earliest version of which occurs in one of the most important early Irish manuscripts, the *Lebhor na h-Uidre* (Book of the Dun Cow), written near the beginning of the twelfth century. The story itself is probably much older than the manuscript in which it is recorded,<sup>13</sup> and in any case was in existence long before Marie's lay was written. According to the version found in the fifteenth century *Book of Fermoy*,<sup>14</sup> Manannán mac Lir assumes the form of Fiachna Lurga, king of the Ulster Dalriada, and with the latter's permission visits his wife.<sup>15</sup> He tells her that she will bear a son who shall be called Mongan and will be famous.

<sup>10</sup> *Silva Gadelica*, II, p. 527, xxviii, text p. 480; cf. *Revue Celtique*, XVI (1895), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> On *Manannán mac Lir*, who was known to both the Goidelic and Brythonic Celts (Welsh, *Manawythan map Llyr*), see d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Le Cycle mythologique irlandais* (*Cours de Littérature celtique*, II), 1884, p. 322 ff., Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, I (1895), p. 24; Douglas Hyde, *Literary History of Ireland*, 1899, pp. 54, 102; Joyce, *Social History of Ir.*, 1903, I., pp. 251, 256. *Manannán* still lives in the popular tradition of Ireland: Wood-Martin, *Pagan Ireland*, Longmans, Green and Co., 1895, p. 124 f.

<sup>12</sup> On the *Tuatha Dé Danann* see d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Le Cycle mythologique irlandais* (*Cours de Litt. celt.*, II), 1884, pp. 140 ff., 266 ff.; Joyce, *Social History of Ir.*, 1903, I, p. 251 f.

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, II, London, 1897, pp. 11, 17, 22 and 35, *Zeitschrift für Celt. Philol.*, II (1899), p. 319; Kuno Meyer, *ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>14</sup> See *Voyage of Bran*, I (1895), p. 72.

<sup>15</sup> In the Middle English lay of *Sir Gowther* (ed. Karl Breul, Oppeln, 1886) the supernatural lover gains the lady's favors by assuming the form of her husband (v. 68 ff.; cf. v. 7 ff. and p. 119 of the edn. cit.). On the similarity between the *Compert Mongain* and *Sir Gowther*, see Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 2d. edn., 1900, p. 389. In the *Tochmarc Étaíne* (see *infra*. n. 38.) Midir, the other-world lover of Queen Étain, appears to her in the form of her would-be mortal admirer, Ailill

The most important point of similarity between this passage and the lay of *Yonac* lies in the fact that both contain the supernatural lover who disguises himself in order to gain access to the wife of a mortal, and makes certain predictions with regard to the offspring of their union.

A still more striking parallel to the French poem is found in one of the prose sections of the *Dinnshenchus*, which Professor Kuno Meyer regards as "eine im 12. Jahrhundert verfasste Prosaauflösung der in den Schulen des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts entstandenen Lehrgedichte über irische Topographie."<sup>16</sup> The story summarized below<sup>17</sup> was therefore probably well known in Marie's time, though doubtless it, like others of our Celtic parallels, underwent many changes before it ever reached the ears of an Anglo-Norman *trouvère*.

"Tuag, daughter of Conall, son of Eterscel, there was she reared, in Tara [apart from men<sup>18</sup>] with a great host of Eriu's kings' daughters about her to protect her. After she had completed her fifth year no man was allowed to see her, so that the

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(*Revue Celtique*, III (1876-78), p. 359; *Irische Texte* I, p. 127). Miss Rickert compares with *Yonac* the *Mabinogi* of *Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*, in which a mortal is transformed by a supernatural being into the latter's semblance, and thus gains access to his wife (see above, n. 5.).

<sup>16</sup> *Festschrift to Whitley Stokes*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 1, n. 1. With regard to the stories contained in the prose collection, Stokes himself says: "Whatever be their date, the documents as they stand are a storehouse of ancient Irish folk-lore, absolutely unaffected, so far as I can judge, by any foreign influence": *Folk Lore*, III (1892), p. 468.

<sup>17</sup> The collection from which this summary is taken is found in the fourteenth century *Book of Ballymote* (*Folk-Lore*, III (1892), p. 511), and other MSS, most of which, except the *Book of Leinster*, range in date from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. See also *Folk Lore*, IV, p. 471 ff.; *Revue Celtique*, XV (1894), pp. 272 ff., 418 ff.; XVI (1895), pp. 31 ff., 135 ff., 269 ff. Cf. *Publications of the Royal Irish Academy*, Todd Lect. Ser. VII, preface. Certain metrical pieces have been ed. and trans. by Edward Gwynn, *Publications of the R. I. A.*, Todd Lect. Ser. VII, VIII, IX.

<sup>18</sup> The words enclosed in brackets are taken from the sixteenth century *Lecan MS* (*Revue Celtique*, XVI (1895), p. 152).



King of Ireland might have the wooing of her. Now Manannán sent unto her a messenger, (one) of his fair messengers, even Fer Figail, son of [the elf-king] Eogabal (a fosterling and a druid of the Tuatha Dé Danann), in a woman's shape, and he was three nights there." On the fourth night he chanted a "sleep-spell" over her and carried her off to Inver Glas, where she was accidentally drowned. Here, as in the lay of *Yonec*, a woman secluded from the society of men is visited by a fairy man who is a shape-shifter and who assumes the form of a woman<sup>19</sup> in order to reach her, just as Muldumarec takes his mistress's shape in order to receive the sacrament.

The passages cited above prove that the shape-shifting fairy lover was a well known figure among the ancient Irish. There is also abundant evidence that the form assumed by supernatural beings both among the Goidels and Brythons was frequently that of a bird. Henri Gaidoz, in his review of Camille Jullian's *Recherches sur la Religion gauloise*,<sup>20</sup> says: "Le principal rôle, dans la faune religieuse des Gaulois, paraît avoir été réservé aux oiseaux";<sup>21</sup> and Sir John Rhŷs, in his *Celtic Folklore*<sup>22</sup>, cites a number of examples of human beings who became birds.

In the ancient Irish saga of the *Tain Bó Regamna* (Cattle Raid of R.),<sup>23</sup> one of the most famous of the Irish supernatural

<sup>19</sup> This feature is also found in the lay of Désiré (ed. Francisque Michel, *Lais inédits des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, 1836, p. 21 f.), where Lucien Foulet (*Zeitschrift für rom. Philol.*, XXIX (1905), p. 39), regards it as borrowed from *Yonec*. For an additional Celtic example see *infra*, n. 77.

<sup>20</sup> *Bibliothèque des Universités du Midi*, Fascicule VI, Bordeaux, 1903.

<sup>21</sup> *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, mai-juin, 1905, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Pub., Oxford, 1901, II, p. 612. See further San-Marte, *Beiträge zur bretonischen u. celtisch-germanischen Heldensage*, Quedlinburg u. Leipzig, 1847, pp. 67, 81, and *Gottfried's von Monmouth Historia Reg. Brit. u. Brut Tysilio*, Halle, 1854, p. 463. Angelo de Gubernatis (*Zoological Mythology*, London, 1872, p. 192) calls attention to the fact that the hawk in mythology is usually regarded as divine and that in the middle ages it was one of the distinctive badges of knighthood.

<sup>23</sup> The story is found in the *Yellow Book of Lecan* and MS, Egerton 1782, both of which were printed and the former translated by Windisch,

women, the *Morrighu*,<sup>24</sup> appears as a black bird, and she is frequently called the *Badb* (scald-crow).<sup>25</sup> In one of the poems in the *Imram Brain* (Voyage of Bran), which form the oldest portions of the text and may have been written down as early as the seventh century,<sup>26</sup> one of Mongan's transformations is said to be a "fair white swan".<sup>27</sup> In the story known as the *Cophur in dá Muccida* (Begetting of the Two Swineherds), which is older than the eleventh century,<sup>28</sup> two fairy beings at one stage of their existence assume the form of ravens,<sup>29</sup> and

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*Irische Texte*, II, 2 (1887), p. 250. See also A. H. Leahy, *Heroic Romances of Ireland*, II (1906), p. 136. The tale has been placed by Strachan on linguistic grounds in a group of stories which may be regarded as more or less exact transcriptions of texts written down in the ninth century or earlier (*Philol. Soc. Trans.*, 1891-94, pp. 497 f., 555). Cf. *Revue Celtique*, XXVI (1905), p. 195.

<sup>24</sup> On two ancient Gaulish altars discovered respectively at Paris and Trèves there appear three cranes, which Professor d'Arbois de Jubainville has interpreted as *Morrighu*, *Bodb* (*Badb*), and *Macha*, three names applied to this deity (*Revue Celtique* XIX (1898), p. 245 ff.). Cf. Dottin, *Manuel pour servir à l'Etude de l'Antiquité celtique*, 1906, p. 237. See further Alexandre Bertrand, *La Religion des Gaulois—Les Druides et le Druidisme*, Paris, 1897, p. 350 ff. On the *Morrighu* and her sisters, see Wood-Martin, *Pagan Ireland*, 1895, p. 127 f., and *Traces of the Elder Faiths in Ireland*, Longmans, Green and Co., 1902, I, p. 359. For appearance of birds on Gaulish coins, see Gaidoz, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, mai-juin, 1905, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> On the appearance of supernatural beings in the form of a crow, see d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Le Cycle mythologique irlandais (Cours de Litt. celt., II)*, 1884, p. 194 f. (cf. p. 267); Wood-Martin, *Pagan Ireland*, 1895, p. 127, *Traces of the Elder Faiths in I.*, 1902, I, p. 359. Cf. Dottin, *Manuel pour servir à l'Etude de l'Antiquité celtique*, 1906, p. 247.

<sup>26</sup> Kuno Meyer, *Voyage of Bran*, I, 1895, p. xvi.

<sup>27</sup> *Voyage of Bran*, I, 1895, p. 26 f. The swan is not mentioned in a document enumerating Mongan's transformations, ed. and trans., Kuno Meyer, *Zeitschrift für Celt. Philol.*, II (1899), p. 314 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Voyage of Bran*, II, 1897, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup> *Irische Texte*, III, 1 (1891), p. 250. See also *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 59; d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Les Druides*, etc., 1906, p. 171 ff. see esp. p. 174).

the prehistoric Tuan mac Cairill, the oldest version of whose history is found in the *Lebor na h-Uidre* and is regarded by Mr. Nutt as "probably a production of the late ninth or early tenth century", tells how he at one time was in the shape of a hawk.<sup>30</sup>

A number of bird transformations are also found in Brythonic literature. In the *Mabinogi* of *Math, Son of Mathonwy*, which probably contains much genuine Welsh tradition,<sup>31</sup> Lleu, when struck by the poisoned lance of Gronw, becomes an eagle,<sup>32</sup> and in the same document Gwydyon changes Blodeuwedd into an owl.<sup>33</sup> In another of the *Mabinogion*—that of *Kulhwch and Olwen*—<sup>34</sup> Menw transforms himself into a bird in order to reach the wonderful Twrch Trwyth.<sup>35</sup> In the *Hanes Taliesin* (History of T.), which though in its present form not older than the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, doubtless contains material

<sup>30</sup> *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 81. See also pp. 299, 291, (cf. p. 79).

<sup>31</sup> Though the oldest of the so-called *Mabinogion* are probably not earlier in composition than the end of the eleventh century, the most recent not later than the thirteenth century (J. Loth, *Les Mab.*, Paris, 1913, Introd., Dottin, *Revue de Synthèse historique*, VI (1903), p. 340 f., and *Manuel*, 1906, p. 3 f.), *Kulhwch and Olwen* and "the four branches of the Mabinogi"—including *Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*; *Branwen, Daughter of Llyr*; *Manawythan, Son of Llyr*; and *Math, Son of Mathonwy*—are largely composed of Celtic tradition long antedating the twelfth century. See Loth, *loc. cit.*, Alfred Nutt, *The Folk-Lore Record*, V (1882), pp. 1 f., 7, 16; *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 18; Anwyl, *Zeitschrift für Celt. Philol.*, I (1897), p. 279 f., *Arch. Cambr.*, 6th ser., IV (1904), p. 208; Rhys, *Proceedings of the Brit. Acad.*, 1903-4, p. 67. See further Ivor B. John, *Transactions of the Guild of Graduates* (of the University of Wales) for 1903, Cardiff, 1904, p. 9 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Loth, *Les Mabinogion*, ed., J. Loth, Paris, 1913, I. p. 204 f., p. 148.

<sup>33</sup> *Les Mabinogion*, edn. cit. p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> *Les Mabinogion*, edn. cit., p. 334.

<sup>35</sup> On the antiquity of the story of the Twrch Trwyth, see San-Marte, *Beiträge zur bretonischen u. celtisch-germanischen Hildensage*, 1847, p. 63 f. Cf. Stevens, *Lit. of the Kymry*, 1876, p. 398, and Rhys, *Proceedings of the Brit. Acad.*, 1903-4, p. 57, *Les Mab.*, edn. cit., I, p. 310, n. 1.

of a much earlier date,<sup>36</sup> there are several examples of bird-transformations, one of which represents Ceridwen as changing herself into a hawk in order to chase Gwion Bach.<sup>37</sup>

These citations show how wide spread among the early Celts was the belief in the ability of supernatural beings to transform themselves or others into birds, and I am told that the appearance of *fées* in bird-form is known to this day in Brittany, Wales, and Ireland.

In the lay of *Yonec* the features of the supernatural lover and the supernatural bird, which we have so far found separate in Celtic literature, are united in one story. It is therefore of the greatest interest to note a similar combination in Irish literature of a high degree of antiquity. In the *Tochmarc Étaíne* (Wooing of Etain),<sup>38</sup> Midir, the supernatural lover of an unfortunate fairy lady, changes himself and his mistress into swans when he escapes with her from the palace of King Eochaid.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Alfred Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 84. See also Dottin, *Revue de Synthèse historique*, VI (1903), p. 327, and Ivor B. John, *Transactions of the Guild of Graduates* (of the University of Wales) for 1903 (1904), p. 9 f.

<sup>37</sup> *The Mabinogion*, transl., Lady Guest, London, 1904, p. 296. Cf. D. W. Nash, *Taliesin*, etc., 1858, p. 152 ff.; Alfred Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 90; Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore*, 1901, II, p. 613 f. In the Welsh poem called the *Kat Godeu*, cited by Nutt (*Voyage of Bran*, II, p. 91), one of the bard's transformations is said to have been an eagle (Cf. D. W. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 227). For further examples of supernatural birds, see Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Hist. Reg. Brit.* (ed. San-Marte, Halle, (1854) II, 9; XII 18; pp. 219. 463 ff. (cf. IX, 6 and p. 377); Rhŷs, *op. cit.*, p. 610; and Henderson, *Survivals in Belief among the Celts*, Glasgow, 1911, p. 92 ff.

<sup>38</sup> For text and trans. of the passage cited, see A. H. Leahy, *Heroic Romances of Ireland*, II (1906), p. 161. The *Tochmarc Étaíne* has been reconstructed from the extant fragments by L. C. Stern, *Zeitschrift für celt. Philol.*, V (1904-5), p. 527 ff. For further bibliography, see Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, I (1895), p. 175, n. 1; Miss Gertrude Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt*, London, II (1913), p. 422, n. 3.

On the antiquity of the story, see Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, II, p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Miss Rickert, following Alfred Nutt, calls attention to the additional fact that the *Tochmarc Étaíne* resembles *Yonec* in depicting the "rivalry

A much more striking parallel than that furnished by the *Tochmarc Étaíne* was noted some twenty years since by Mr. Alfred Nutt. The episode in point is found in the *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* (Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel), contained in a manuscript known as the *Yellow Book of Lecan*.<sup>40</sup> This codex dates from the fourteenth century, but we are fully justified in treating the passage summarized below as belonging to a version of the story far earlier than the date at which *Yonect* was written.<sup>41</sup> The account is as follows:

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between a mortal and a fairy . . . . . for the love of a woman, and of a consequent feud which results in the overthrow of the race of the mortal" (*Marie de France, Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 186). The fairy vengeance resulting from the strife between King Eochaid and Midir is described in the *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, which forms a sequel to the *Tochmarc Étaíne*.

<sup>40</sup> The saga has been ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes from the *Lebhor na h-Uidre* (L. U.) (in which it is found in fragmentary form), and the *Yellow Book of Lecan* (Y. B. L.), in the *Revue Celtique*, XXII (1901), pp. 9 ff., 165 ff., 282 ff. For analysis, see Zimmer, Kuhn's *Zeitschrift*, XXVIII, p. 556 ff., *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache* (N. F.), VIII, p. 554.

<sup>41</sup> The arguments on which this conclusion is based are as follows: The *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* is mentioned in the well known list of heroic sagas given in the *Book of Leinster* (L. L.; about the middle of the twelfth cent.). The list includes those tales with which every Irish poet was required to be acquainted; hence the *Togail* must have been well known at the time the MS was written. Parts of the story are referred to in two of the *Dinnshenchus* poems found in the *Book of Leinster* and elsewhere (*Publications of the R. I. A.*, Todd Lect. Ser., VII (1900), p. 60, l. 77 ff., and IX, pt. 2 (1906), p. 4, l. 37 ff.). Moreover, the death of Conaire the Great, which is described in the *Togail*, is referred to in the *Lebor na h-Uidre* version of the *Serglige Conchulainn*, which text is said to have been copied from the *Yellow Book of Slane*, evidently a MS older than the early twelfth century, at which date L. U. was transcribed (Zimmer, Kuhn's *Zeitschrift*, XXVIII (1887), p. 554; cf. *Irische Texte*, I, p. 197). The passage containing the story of the bird-man, though found only in Y. B. L. and later MSS, probably belonged originally to the L. U. version also, for Y. B. L. and L. U. are very similar in the passages they have in common (*Folk-Lore*, II (1891), p. 88). But the tale itself must be very much older than even the early twelfth century,

Cormac, king of Ulster, weds the daughter of Eochaid Feidlech, High King of Ireland, but puts her away "because she was unfruitful, save that she bore a daughter to Cormac". He then weds Etain, a *fée* (really the same woman who had formerly been his wife). She demands that the daughter of the woman who was abandoned before her shall be killed,<sup>42</sup> but Cormac refuses to give the child to her. "Then his two thralls take her (the child) to a pit, and she smiles a laughing smile at them as they were putting her into the pit. Then their (kindly) nature came to them (and they decided to spare her) . . . . A fenced (?) house of wickerwork is made by them for her without any door, but only a window and a skylight."<sup>43</sup> Here the girl grows up and is educated in needlework. While in this strange dwelling she is discovered by King Eterscel's attendants. "Now while she was there next morning she saw a Bird on the skylight coming to her, and he leaves his birdskin on the floor of the house, and went to her and captured her, and said: 'They are coming to thee from the king to wreck thy house and to bring thee to him perforce. And thou wilt be pregnant by me, and bear a son, and that son must not kill birds. And "Conaire, son of Mess Buachalla" shall be his name', for hers was Mess

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for Zimmer (Kuhn's *Zeitschrift*, XXVIII, p. 583), shows reason for believing that the part of the story we are now examining was taken from the *Book of Drum Snechta*, a lost MS which was used in preparing the *Lebor na h-Huidre*. Finally, Strachan, on the ground of the preservation of the deponent conjugation in the *L. U.* version of the *Togail*, places the tale in a group of texts which may be regarded as more or less exact copies of stories written down in the ninth century or earlier (*Philol. Soc. Trans.*, 1891-94, pp. 499 f., 555; cf. Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 9).

<sup>42</sup> According to Stokes's trans. (*Revue Celtique*, XXII (1901) p. 19), it was the father who desired the child's death. The text at this point is perfectly ambiguous, but in the absence of direct grammatical evidence, it seems probable that we have here an example of the Jealous Stepmother.

<sup>43</sup> According to one of the *Egerton* MSS, the thralls put the child into the hollow of a tree, where she is discovered by King Eterscel's cowherds.

Buachalla, 'the Cowherds' fosterchild'." The prediction is fulfilled. Conaire is born, and later becomes king, but meets his death at Da Derga's hostel by violating, together with others of his tabus, those imposed upon him by his supernatural father.<sup>44</sup>

This remarkable story, in spite of a certain element of obscurity, perhaps due to its being a redaction of a still older account, bears a strong similarity to the lay of *Yonec*. In both a woman kept in a secluded dwelling is visited by a supernatural lover who enters her apartment through a window. He comes in the form of a bird, which disguise he abandons at will.<sup>45</sup> Mr. Nutt in emphasizing the importance of the Irish account for any investigation of the origins of *Yonec*, says: "This tale . . . contains the earliest recorded post-classical European examples of the following folk-tale themes: the Jealous Stepmother and Exposed Child (Etain is the stepmother) and the Supernatural Lover in Bird Shape. This latter theme makes its earliest appearance in general European literature in Marie de France's *lai* of *Yonec*.<sup>46</sup> I venture to think the significance of these facts indisputable; they testify to the Celtic character of Marie's work, which indeed can only be denied by those who are ignorant of the subject."<sup>47</sup>

The fairy lover in bird-form also plays an important part in another Irish tale, told in one of the *Dinnshenchus* poems, which, as already indicated,<sup>48</sup> were probably written as early as the ninth

<sup>44</sup> *Revue Celtique*, XXII (1901), p. 18 ff.

<sup>45</sup> Johnston calls attention to the fact that Mess Buachalla, like the heroine of *Yonec*, bears a son who later becomes king of the country (*Publins. of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XX (1905), p. 329).

<sup>46</sup> The bird lover also turns up in a rather interesting fashion in a Low German romance called *Der Junker und der treue Heinrich*, which probably dates from the fourteenth century. It has been ed. by Karl Kinzel, Berlin, 1880. Cf. the version published by von der Hagen, *Gesamtabenteuer* III, Stuttgart u. Tübingen, 1850, p. 197 ff.

<sup>47</sup> *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897, p. 56, n. 1. See also E. Freymond in Vollmüller's *Kritischer Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der romanischen Philologie*, III, 1891-94 (1897), p. 167.

<sup>48</sup> P. 32 and n. 16.

or tenth century. The poem in question in its earliest form occurs in the well known *Book of Leinster*.<sup>49</sup> Copies are also found in three later manuscripts in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. These are: 23.L.22<sup>50</sup> (modern undated), 23.L.34<sup>51</sup> (early 18th century), and 24.P.5<sup>52</sup> (probably late 17th century). I give below an edition and an English rendering, based on a copy and translation of the *Leinster* version, for which I am indebted to Mr. E. J. Gwynn, of Trinity College, Dublin.

## [SNÁM DA ÉN.]

Snám da Én, na éoin diatá,  
sloindfet duib can immarga;  
senchas sár confeith in slúag, 5  
in ní diatá in Snám sírfúar.<sup>53</sup>

Nár mac Féic meic Conaill Chais  
nirsat briathra fir anbais:  
rob í<sup>54</sup> a chéile, cœm in ben,  
Estiu in ban-fhénnid bith-gel<sup>55</sup>

Buidi mac Deirg, co ndíri,  
a crúachánaib Dubthiri 10  
ba lennán d'Estin amra-  
Budi mac Deirg dath-amra.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> P. 202, 2. l. 60—p. 203, 1. l. 27, of the *Facsimile*, ed. Robert Atkinson, Dublin, 1880. For partial transcription, see Stern, *Revue Celtique*, XIII (1892), p. 10 f., nn. 5 ff. Prose versions of the story have been edited from one MS by L. C. Stern (*Rev. Celt.*, XIII (1892), p. 10 f.) and from two MSS by myself (with the assistance of Messrs. O. J. Bergin and J. H. Lloyd) (*Rev. Celt.*, XXXI (1910), p. 448 ff.). See also *Eriu* V (1911), p. 221 f. Cf. *Rev. Celt.*, XVI (1895), p. 57; *Silva Gadelica*, II, pp. 469, 514.

<sup>50</sup> P. 237, l. 17 ff.

<sup>51</sup> P. 284, l. 16 ff.

<sup>52</sup> P. 161, l. 6 ff.

<sup>53</sup> LL, *sírbúad*, ever-excellent.

<sup>54</sup> 23. L. 22, *ro-bi*, killed.

<sup>55</sup> 23. L. 34, *bruingheal*, of the white breast.

<sup>56</sup> All except LL, *dath-chalma*, complexion-brave.



Budi<sup>57</sup> mac Deirg dian-garta  
ocus Lúan<sup>58</sup> a chomalta  
ir-richt da én, áebda<sup>59</sup> sin, 15  
tictis co h-Estin imglain.

Andsin dochantais don tslúag  
céol seng sírechtach sírbúan  
co cotlad in slúag uile  
risin céol na sídchuire. 20

Tráth n-a chotlad cách do chéin  
tictis n-a rectaib fadéin:  
dobid Buide, nír deccair,  
is Estiu i n-oenlepaid.

Andsin no-s-iarfaigend Nár 25  
dia druid,<sup>60</sup> ba díchra in comrád,  
ca bale óssa tecat na h-éoin  
co h-Estin álaind ardmóir.

IS andsin atbert in drúi:  
"ní chélam-ni fort, a rí;<sup>61</sup> 30  
is iat na h-éoin dothaet and,  
Bude is Luan nach lánmall."

Andsin tecait forsinn áth,  
immar nathictis co gnáth:  
ní-ma-tancatar<sup>62</sup> n-a n-dáil: 35  
luid Estiu issin comdail.

Téit mac meic Conaill Cernaig  
ar a n-druim,— ba mór d'erbaid—  
co rodibairg,—<sup>63</sup> trén a chur—  
corosmarb do óen-urchur. 40

<sup>57</sup> 23. L. 22 and 24. P. 5 omit the first two lines of this stanza.

<sup>58</sup> 23. L. 34 inserts *laochta* after Lúan.

<sup>59</sup> All except LL, *sáebda*, deceitful.

<sup>60</sup> All except LL, plural.

<sup>61</sup> 23. L. 34, *aoín ní*, a single thing.

<sup>62</sup> All except LL substitute for the last two lines the following:

*garit bádar isin tráig*

*corluid Esti 'na ccomdail* (various spellings):

For a short time they were at the strand until Esti went to the place of tryst.

<sup>63</sup> All except LL. add *sleig*, spear.

Fáchtair bethu bec il-Lúan  
 corránic inn ath n-ind-úar  
*ocus* conn áth túas atbath,  
 Lúan mac Lugair mac Lugdach.

Luid Estiu lám *frisín* sruth 45  
*ocus* conn áth túas atbath.  
 is úadi sluinte*r* in mag  
 bail is marb, *immaig* Eisten.

Luid Nár co Móin Tíre Náir<sup>65</sup>  
 ar cinniud ar a comdál; 50  
 is marb do chumaid a mná  
 Nár mac Féic fer ná terna.

IS de sin atá Ath Lúain  
 is Snám da Én ri h-oenúair,  
 's<sup>66</sup> Móin Tíri Náir,—*niamda* in dál— 55  
 's<sup>66</sup> Mag n-Esten Sinna na snám. S.

*Translation.* [THE SWIMMING-PLACE OF THE TWO BIRDS.]

Snám da En, from what birds it is named  
 I will set forth to you without deceit—  
 a tale of violent deeds that the host encounters,  
 the cause whence the ever-chilly swimming-place is named.

Nar, son of Fiac, son of Conall Cas, 5  
 (his were not the words of a fickle man [i. e. he kept his word]),  
 his mate—fair the woman—  
 was Estiu the ever-white, the woman-warrior.

Bude, son of Derg, with fitness,  
 from the hillocks of Dubthir, 10  
 was famous Estiu's paramour,—  
 Bude, son of Derg, famed for beauty.

Bude, son of Derg, of eager hospitality,  
 and Luan, his foster brother,  
 in the form of two birds—lovely they were— 15  
 came to radiant Estiu.

<sup>65</sup> 23. *L.* 34 and 24. *P.* 5 substitute for this line:  
     agus [ro]buth rogharít a riudh;  
     And her race was very short.

<sup>66</sup> *LL*, *tír in Nair*.

<sup>66</sup> *MSS*, *is*.

Then they chanted to the host  
a shrill bewitching ceaseless strain,  
till the whole host fell asleep  
at the strain of the fairy folk. 20

At an hour when all were long asleep  
they came in their proper shapes:  
Bude—it was no marvel—  
shared Estiu's bed.

Then Nar enquires 25  
of his druid,—earnest was their discourse—  
From what quarter come the birds  
to lovely lofty Estiu.

Then the druid made answer:  
"We conceal it not from thee, O King! 30  
These are birds that come thither:  
Bude, and Luan that is not sluggish."

Then [the birds] come to the ford  
where their custom was to come:  
not luckily they came to their meeting: 35  
Estiu went to the place of tryst.

The son's son of Conall Cernach goes  
behind them,—it was a mighty loss—  
and hurled [a spear],—strong his cast—  
so that he slew them at one shot. 40

A little life is left in Luan  
and he reached the chilly ford;  
and above the ford he died,  
Luan, son of Lugar, son of Lugaid.

Estiu went along the stream-side, 45  
and no short race she ran:  
from her is named the plain  
where she died, in Mag Esten.

Nar went to the Moor of Nar's Land,  
after breaking in upon their tryst: 50  
he dies of grief for his wife,  
Nar, son of Fiac, a man that never fled.

Hence is Ath Luain named,  
and Snam da En likewise,

and Moin Tire Nair,—famous plain—  
and Mag Esten of many-forded Shannon.

The preservation of the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én* in its several versions in at least six manuscripts furnishes strong presumptive evidence of the popularity of the story, and the points of similarity between it and the first part of the lay of *Yoncc* are certainly too marked to escape observation, and probably too numerous to be entirely accidental. In their broader outlines the two stories are almost identical. Both describe a tragic love affair between a fairy being and a mortal wife. A more detailed examination reveals still other resemblances:

1. The husband is a man of high position. In *Yoncc* he is "avuëz" of Caruënt, and lord of the country. In the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én* he has one or more druidical advisers, a fact which indicates that he is of kingly rank.<sup>67</sup>

2. He is jealous of his wife.

3. The wife is of great beauty.

4. In *Yoncc* she is desirous of a lover; in the *Dinnshenchus* she is evidently not averse to Bude's attentions.

5. In the French poem she receives her lover in a tower. The context of the Irish account indicates that Estiu sometimes entertained Bude inside her husband's dwelling.

6. The catastrophe is due to the discovery of the lady and her lover together.

7. The lover is of supernatural origin. In the *Dinnshenchus*, Bude is said to belong to the *síochaire*, or fairy folk.

8. His dwelling is reached by entering a hill-side. This is doubtless implied in the Irish statement that he comes *a crúachanaib Dubtire* (from the hillocks of Dubtir), and even in the absence of this bit of evidence his being a hill-dweller might readily be inferred from the fact that so many Celtic other-world beings resided in the green mounds of Ireland.

<sup>67</sup> See Alexandre Bertrand, *La Religion des Gaulois.—Les Druides et le Druidisme*, 1897, p. 277 ff. See also d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Les Druides*, etc., 1906, p. 115 f., and Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, 1903, I, p. 42.

9. In order to gain access to his mistress, the lover disguises himself as a beautiful bird.

10. His visits are of frequent occurrence.

11. His presence is finally discovered, and his death is caused by the husband.

12. The person who discloses the lover's existence is a dependent of the husband.

Considering together the various fragments of Goidelic and Brythonic tradition given above, with special attention to the story just analyzed, we are justified in concluding that the tale of a shape-shifting fairy lover who visits a mortal mistress in the form of a bird, if not a piece of pan-Celtic tradition, was at least current on Celtic soil long before the date of Marie's lay,<sup>68</sup> and that she or her source probably knew and utilized a form of the story resembling more or less closely that found in the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én*.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> For a modern Celtic example of the bird-lover, see Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, new edn., 1890, I., p. 64 ff.

<sup>69</sup> The type of story outlined above furnishes, I believe, an explanation of the somewhat obscure B version of the ballad of *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight* (Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, no. 4), which "of all ballads . . . has obtained the widest circulation". It begins as follows:

"There came a bird out o a bush,  
On water for to dine,  
And sighing sair, says the king's daughter,  
'O wae's this heart o mine'!  
He's taen a harp into his hand,  
He's harped them all asleep,  
Except it was the king's daughter,  
Who one wink couldna get".

He then carries off the daughter, but she escapes from him. The lover, who here appears on the scene so unexpectedly, is undoubtedly the elf-knight of version A, who also carries off the lady and is outdone by her. In the light of the Irish stories we have examined, it is probable that if the tale were told in full, we should have an account of how a fairy being took the shape of a bird to gain access to a princess, and then, reassuming the appearance of a man, put her attendants to sleep with supernatural music and carried her off. See Schofield, *Eng. Lit. from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, 1906, p. 199. Contrast the opinion of Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, Boston and New York, 1907, p. 153.

An important feature common to the lay of *Yonac*, the *Compert Mongain*, the *Tochmarc Étaíne*, the *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, the story of Tuag, and the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én* is that the fairy lover changes his form voluntarily, and not as the result of any charm or enchantment exercised by himself or others. Both the French and the Irish accounts are marked by a frank acceptance of the supernatural transformation, without any effort to explain away its existence on the ground of "druidical power", as in the prose versions of *Snám da Én*, or by attributing it to some sort of incantation on the part of the mistress, as in several modern analogues to the lay of *Yonac*, or to a spell imposed upon the lover by a wicked *fée*, as happens in *L'Oiseau bleu*,<sup>70</sup> the most frequently cited modern analogue to the French poem. The tendency to regard the transformations of supernatural beings as entirely voluntary is highly characteristic of early Irish mythical literature, and must be regarded as representing a stage of development before the process of rationalization had deprived the immortal *Tuatha Dé Danann* of their original power and degraded them to more or less vulgar sorcerers. The agreement of the lay of *Yonac* with the Irish accounts in this respect is, I believe, highly significant, and furnishes an additional indication that in the French poem we are dealing with a very primitive version of the story of the bird-lover.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STORY

Coming now to the consideration of those features in which *Yonac* differs from the Irish stories, we note that the imprisonment of the wife in a tower by her husband, though forming an important part of the French poem, is not found in either the *Compert Mongain*, the *Tochmarc Étaíne*, or the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én*, the only Irish stories in which the heroine is married. Its absence is not, however, surprising in view of the position probably occupied by a woman of the higher class in early Irish social life. When married to a man of equal rank and fortune with herself, she was comparatively independent,

<sup>70</sup> *Les Contes des Fées*, par Madame D \* \* \*, Paris, 1757, I, p. 67 ff.

and had the power of divorce. She took part in affairs, and even went out to war.<sup>71</sup> Probably the most noteworthy example is Queen Medb of Connacht, who, in spite of the fact that she had a husband, constantly took the lead in the campaign against Ulster described in the great epic of the *Táin Bó Cúáilnge* (Cattle Raid of Cooley). We cannot but recall also the warlike British queen Boudicca, whose heroic stand against the Roman forces is recorded by Tacitus in his *Annales*.<sup>72</sup> Estiu also was a queen and a woman-warrior (*banfhénnid*)—scarcely the kind of woman who would be conceived of as pining for a fairy lover in a lonely *dún*.

The character of the wife in *Yoncc* is no less typical of the age in which the poem was written. The heroine of the lay probably represented a type as familiar to the courtly circles of the twelfth century as the imprudent wife is to the readers of divorce-court proceedings today; and doubtless many a beautiful young *dame*, immured by a jealous husband in a lonely castle, gazed longingly through her narrow casement, and wished for the fairy knight who should bring the touch of romance into her monotonous existence. To the hearers and readers of Marie's lay the delicate, languishing, intriguing wife of a crabbed, jealous old man would be much more interesting than the more robust Celtic spouse, who, though equally unfaithful to her husband, made a far smaller claim upon their sympathies.<sup>73</sup> The heroine of early Irish story is likely to be epic in character; the lovesome ladies of the Arthurian poems and Breton lays are most often romantic in the extreme sense of the word. This difference is not difficult of explanation. The mediaeval *jongleur* was prob-

<sup>71</sup> On the position of the wife among the early Celts, see d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Études sur le Droit celtique* (*Cours de Litt. celt.*, VIII), Paris, 1895, p. 229 f.; *La Famille celtique*, Paris, 1905, pp. 55 ff., 171 ff.; Joyce, *Social History of Ireland*, 1903, II, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> See Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, 1904, p. 66.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Bédier, *Revue des deux Mondes*, vol. 107 (1891), p. 859, and Pietro Toldo, *Roman. Forsch.*, XVI (1904), p. 610. See further Weinhold, *Die deutschen frauen in dem Mittelalter*, 2d edn., Wien, 1882, I, p. 269 f.

ably just as anxious as the modern novelist to make his stories "up to date". This end he could easily further in the case of a tale like that of Bude and Estiu, without essentially disturbing the relations of its characters, by introducing a type of story known as *Inclusa*, which must have been well known in the late twelfth century and is perhaps of Oriental origin. It tells how a lover outwits a jealous husband who has shut up his young and beautiful wife in a tower.<sup>74</sup>

The introduction of the *Inclusa* motif into a tale such as that of *Snám da Én* would be easily suggested by the similarity between the former and Celtic tales like certain of those enumerated above. In those of *Bennan mac Brec* and of *Corrcend*, as well as in the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én*, the husband manifests the bitterest jealousy towards the lover, and in the *Tochmarc Étaíne* the unfortunate queen is inside her husband's palace with closed doors when she is abducted by the wily Midir.<sup>75</sup>

It is also worthy of note that the stories of *Tuag* and of *Mess Buachalla* agree with the *Inclusa* type in representing the woman as being kept in an isolated dwelling. In the former the heroine is a beautiful maiden who has been chosen as a fitting mate for the king, and as such is being brought up "apart from men", lest her purity be contaminated before she is conducted to the royal couch.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Freymond thinks Ahlström wrong in regarding the feature of the jealous wife-confining husband as Oriental (Vollmöller's *Kritischer Jahresbericht*, III, 1891-94, 2 (1897), p. 164: cf. Miss Rickert, *Marie de France. Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 172). In the absence of definite evidence, it is of course impossible to dogmatize on this point. I believe, however, that Ahlström overestimates the Oriental element in the first part of *Yonac* (*Studier i den fornfranska Laislitteraturen*, 1892, p. 91 f.).

<sup>75</sup> See above, p. 36. It should also be noted that in the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én* the heroine is inside the *dún* of her husband, when she first receives the visits of Bude.

<sup>76</sup> This custom, which is perhaps connected with the savage practice of secluding girls at puberty (on which see Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 2d edn., 1900, III, p. 204 [cf. pp. 324, 422]) is also illustrated in the *Longes mac n-Usnig* (Exile of the Sons of Uisnech), one of the most famous of all the



The necessity for some sort of change in Celtic accounts like the above, in order to adapt them to a courtly twelfth-century audience, together with the points of contact which they and the other stories mentioned have with the *Inclusa* type, is, I believe, amply sufficient to account for the appearance of the latter in the lay of *Yonec*.<sup>77</sup> We should, of course, not be surprised at the appearance of non-Celtic material in an originally Celtic story, and it is possible that we have here a case in point.<sup>78</sup> These ob-

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early Irish romantic tales. Here the heroine is being reared in an isolated dwelling at the time when she forms her fatal attachment for Noisi: *Irische Texte*, I, p. 71. For bibliography and an edn. and trans. of a Belfast MS by Douglas Hyde, see *Zeitschrift für celt. Philol.*, II (1899), p. 138 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Attention should also be called to an Irish tale, which, though taken down from a popular source in 1835, may represent a piece of early tradition, and bears considerable resemblance to the *Inclusa* type outlined above. It is recorded among the notes to the *Annals of the Four Masters* (I, p. 18, n. 5). Balor "of the evil eye", the famous Fomorian chieftain who figures in the ancient saga of the "Second" *Cath Maige Turedh*, shuts up his beautiful daughter in a tower on Tory island, where she is constantly guarded from the approach of men by twelve matrons. Mac Kineely, a neighboring chieftain, by the help of a friendly *banshee* gains access to the tower in the form of a woman, and while the attendants are buried in a magic slumber, becomes the princess's lover and departs leaving her pregnant. Three children are born, one of whom, like Yonec, later avenges the death of his father, who has been slain by Balor. For another version of the story, see Curtin, *Hero Tales of Ireland*, London, 1894, p. 296 ff. Cf. Curtin, *op. cit.*, p. 58 ff., *Publications of the Irish Texts Society*, X (1908), pp. 103, 143. For these references I am indebted to Miss Eleanor Hull.

<sup>78</sup> Schofield has pointed out that in the lay of *Guingamor* "alongside a hind-messenger, a magic ship and a fay mistress, which may be regarded as Celtic, we find such features as a Gordian knot, a chastity girdle, a temple of Venus on which Ovid's stories are depicted, a wheel of fortune, but above all a transformed Oriental tale of a harem adventure in which a jealous spy-setting husband detects the amour of his young wife, whom he has kept confined in a place apart, and of whose attendant it is stated euphemistically (l. 257) that he was an eunuch" (*Publications of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XV (n. s. VIII) (1900), p. 173). See also Reinhold Koehler, quoting Ahlström, in Warnke's *Die Lais*, 1900, p. LXXVIII.

servations, let it be repeated, in no way weaken the hypothesis that the French poem is based primarily on Celtic tradition.

Another apparent difficulty is encountered in the person of the old woman who in the lay of *Yonac* discovers the existence of the bird-lover. The fairy knight, after making the lady his mistress, warns her that misfortune will result if his visits become known, his language strongly suggesting the *tabus* imposed by supernatural beings upon their mortal favorites in Celtic romance.<sup>79</sup> The lady after the coming of Muldumarec regains her lost beauty, and becomes once more contented and happy, thereby exciting the suspicions of her husband, who directs his sister to spy more closely on her actions. The old woman at last discovers the lovers together, and reveals to her brother how the bird-man comes and goes. The *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én* is here again of great assistance in determining what may have been the original form of the tale on which *Yonac* is based. In the Irish story the husband, suspicious of his wife's behavior, consults his druid, and learns from him that the birds which visit Estiu are really Bude and Luan, who in the earlier part of the poetical version are said to belong to the fairy folk. The druid also appears elsewhere in early Irish literature in an affair between a mortal and a fairy. In the *Echtra Connla Chaim* (Adventures of C. the Fair),<sup>80</sup> found in the *Lebor na h-Uidre* and probably

<sup>79</sup> It is well known that other-world beings, when they enter into relations with mortals, are likely to establish some sort of *tabu*, or prohibition, the infringement of which results in evil. See Laistner, *Das Rätsel der Sphinx*, p. 146 f. Examples of the revelation *tabu* may be found in the following ancient Irish tales: *Noinden Ulad* (Debility of the Ultonians; ed. and trans., Windisch, *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der könig. sächsisch. Gesell. der Wiss.*, Phil.-Hist. Classe, XXXVI (1884), p. 338 ff.); and *Aidead Muirchertaig maic Erca* (Death of Muirchertach m. E.; ed. and trans., Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, XXIII (1902), p. 397); cf. *Tochmarc Becfola* (Wooing of B., Egerton version, ed. and trans., S. H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I. p. 85 ff., II, p. 91 ff.). See also *Les Mabinogion*, ed. Loth, 1913, I, p. 98.

<sup>80</sup> Ed. Windisch, *Kurzgefasste irische Grammatik*, p. 118 ff.; trans., *L'Épopée celt. en Irlande*, I, p. 385 ff. On the antiquity of the tale, see Strachan, *Philol. Soc. Trans.*, 1891-94, pp. 512, 555.

representing a very ancient piece of tradition, Connla, son of the famous Conn of the Hundred Battles, is visited by a fairy woman, who invites him to accompany her to the beautiful land of the everliving, the "Elysium of the Pagan Irish". The father, who happens at the time to be near, does not see the supernatural visitor, and, astonished to hear his son holding converse apparently with thin air, calls his druid to drive away what he supposes to be an evil spirit.

Although many erroneous views have prevailed in the past regarding the druidic system among the early Celts, one thing is pretty certain. The druids played a prominent part in their social and religious life, acting as intermediaries between them and the supernatural beings with which they peopled the unseen world. According to Alexandre Bertrand, "les druides étaient en Irlande, comme en Gaule, magiciens, devins, médecins, professeurs, conseillers des rois".<sup>81</sup> The identification of the supernatural visitors by the druid would therefore have been easily understood by those who heard the love-story of Bude and Estiu. This of course would not have been the case after the tale passed into the hands of the Christianized peoples of England or the Continent. The elderly female who acted as *duenna* to the youthful wives of twelfth century England and France was doubtless a personage but too well known to the pretty women of romantic tendencies in Marie's day, and the substitution of such a figure for the druid in the original story would contribute largely to the interest and intelligibility of the narrative without disturbing its dramatic development.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *La Religion des Gaulois*, etc., 1897, p. 277 ff. Cf. d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Les Druides*, etc., 1906, p. 115 f.; and Joyce, *Social History*, 1903, I, p. 237; Bury, *Life of St. Patrick*, 1905, p. 76 f.; Dottin, *Manuel*, 1906, p. 273; Rhys, *Proceedings of the Brit. Acad.*, 1903-4, p. 55.

<sup>82</sup> A figure corresponding in a measure to the *duenna* in *Yonac* is found in connection with a motif somewhat resembling the *Inclusa* in the *Longes mac n-Uisnig*, to which reference has already been made. Miss Hull has called attention to the fact that the heroine's guardian, a druidess, "has in [a] late version lost her repellent qualities; the terrible magician of the early tales has changed into a fond and foolish old nurse who cannot resist the pleadings of her charge" (*Folk-Lore*, XV (1904), p. 25).

In the lay of *Yonect* the discovery of the bird-lover results in his final disappearance. This is a common feature of early Celtic stories dealing with other-world beings. The disappearance is moreover usually interpreted as the death of the fairy being, as in the French poem and in the *Dinnshenchus* of *Snám da Én*. In several modern analogues to the lay of *Yonect*, however, the story ends happily. The bird-lover on being wounded departs, it is true, but he is usually found later by his mistress, who then becomes his wife.<sup>83</sup> If this represents, as it probably does, a comparatively late stage of development, the agreement of the lay of *Yonect* with the *Dinnshenchus* in giving the opening episode a tragic termination must be regarded as additional evidence that Marie used a very early form of the story and followed her original closely.<sup>84</sup>

The trap utilized by the jealous husband in *Yonect* finds no parallel in early Celtic literature, so far as I have discovered.<sup>84a</sup> It may, as Johnston suggests,<sup>85</sup> have been taken from some such tale as *L'Oiseau bleu*, but in any case it cannot be regarded as having certainly formed a part of the original story.

#### THE JOURNEY TO THE LOVER'S KINGDOM

After the disappearance of Muldumarec, the heroine of *Yonect* manages to get out of a window from which she has, though so long imprisoned, apparently never before attempted to escape, leaps twenty feet to the earth, and tracks her lover by the blood-stains to a cave in the side of a hill, through which she passes into "un mult bel pre" (v. 360). Nearby she perceives a city seemingly built entirely of silver. On entering she sees no inhabitants in the streets, but later, after passing through two rooms

<sup>83</sup> But see the Portuguese folk-tale mentioned by Johnston, *Publications of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XX (1905), p. 334.

<sup>84</sup> Cf Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

<sup>84a</sup> A somewhat similar device is used by a lover to wound an old woman who spies on himself and mistress in a text found in the 15th cent. *Book of Fermoy* (*Voyage of Bran*, I, p. 78). See further Gertrude Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt*, I, p. 220, n. 2.

<sup>85</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 330.

of the palace, in each of which a knight is sleeping, she finds in a third her dying lover, reclining on a gorgeous bed, about which candles burn day and night. After receiving certain gifts and instructions from Muldumarec she returns home, apparently making the whole journey within one day.

The lack of skill evinced in the narration of this episode is evident, even to a superficial observer.<sup>86</sup> The inconsistencies look like the result of an attempt to rationalize a frankly marvellous story in order to fit it into a tale with which it originally had no connection.

Muldumarec, as we have seen, is probably in origin "en sid-konung, en herskare öfver dessa mystika väsen, hvarmed den keltiska och särskildt den iriska fantasien befolkade de urgamla grafhögarna, 'sids'";<sup>87</sup> the hillside entrance to his kingdom, the beautiful grassy plain, the gorgeous decorations of the mysterious city, and its deserted appearance are all well-known features of the Celtic other-world; and the journey thither made by a mortal in search of some person or object is one of the most familiar types of Irish literature.<sup>88</sup> There are also several early Irish stories in which a wife is carried to the other world by a supernatural lover. We have already had occasion to refer to the *Tochmarc Étaíne*, in which the wife of King Eochaid is abducted by the supernatural Midir, who has the power of transforming himself into a bird.<sup>89</sup> One of the *Dinnshenchus* poems found in the *Book of Leinster* and other manuscripts, tells how Midir also carried off Ess, daughter of Etain, to the subterranean fairy palace of Bri Léith, and kept her there nine years.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Hertz, *Spielmannsbuch*, 2d. edn., 1900, p. 379 f.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Ahlstrom, *Studier i den fornfranska Laislitteraturen*, 1892, p. 92.

<sup>88</sup> On the other world journey in Celtic and mediaeval Romance, see A. C. L. Brown, *Iwain, A Study*, [Harvard] *Studies and Notes*, VIII (1903), and *Publins. of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XX (1905), p. 673 ff. Cf. Schofield, *Studies and Notes*, V (1896), p. 221 ff.

<sup>89</sup> According to the *Lecan* version of the story of Tuag, the fairy man intended to carry off the lady i *Tir Banthsuthain*, "into the Land of Eternal Women," the Celtic other-world (*Revue Celtique*, XVI (1895), p. 151).

<sup>90</sup> *Publins. of the Royal Ir. Acad.*, Todd Lect. Ser. VII (1900), p. 2 ff.; IX, p. 2 ff.

Similar accounts are contained in the *Echtra Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri* (Adventures of Cormac in the Land of Promise),<sup>91</sup> which is probably older than the fourteenth century *Yellow Book of Lecan* in which it is preserved, and in the *Echtra Thaidg meic Chein* (Adventures of Tadg, son of Cian),<sup>92</sup> and the *Leighes Coise Chein* (Healing of Cian's Leg),<sup>93</sup> neither of which can, unfortunately, be assigned to a very early date.

In the light of these facts, it seems not improbable that the visit to the lover's kingdom in *Yonect* is based on a Celtic account of a journey to the other-world, made by the lady alone or in company with her fairy-lover, and that the attempt of some unskilful narrator to connect it with the preceding and following episodes resulted in certain incongruities in the narrative.

#### THE SEMI-SUPERNATURAL SON

In the lay of *Yonect* the bird-lover, before his final departure, tells his mistress that she is pregnant by him and will bear a son who will be brave and valiant, and shall be called *Yonect*.

<sup>91</sup> *Ir. Texte*, III, I, p. 211 ff.

<sup>92</sup> *Silva Gadelica*, II, p. 390 ff.

<sup>93</sup> *Silva Gadelica*, II, p. 332 ff. A passage in the Rawlinson *Dinnshenchus* tells how Englic, the daughter of Elcmaire, was carried off by the "Bright Folk and the fairy hosts" of Ireland. She is said to have been in love with the well known fairy chief Oengus mac ind Oc (*Folk-Lore*, III (1892), p. 506). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 473. It is possible also that we have perverted examples of this type of story in one of the *Dinnshenchus* poems (*Publins. of the Royal Ir. Acad.*, Todd Lecture Ser. VII (1900), p. 46 f.), and in the *Tochmarc Becfolu* (*Publins. Royal Ir. Acad.*, Ir. MSS Ser., I, 1). On the importance of abduction stories in early Irish literature, see Miss Gertrude Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolde*, London, II (1913), p. 292 ff. The lay of *Sir Orfeo* gives an account of the abduction of a mortal woman by a supernatural lover. For a comparison of this poem with the *Tochmarc Étáine*, see Kittredge, *American Journal of Philol.*, VII (1886), p. 191 ff. On the famous story of the abduction of Guinevere and its Celtic analogues, see K. G. T. Webster, *Eng. Stud.*, XXXVI, p. 340 ff. See also *Hist. litt. de la France*, XXX, pp. 92, 110; Kittredge, [Harvard] *Studies and Notes in Philol. and Lit.*, VIII (1903), pp. 261, 190, n. 2; *Romania*, XII, p. 459 ff.; Fletcher, [Harvard] *Studies and Notes*, X (1906), pp. 94, 95, n. 1. See further *Perceval* (v. 12, 954 ff.), and Child, *Ballads*, n. 30, I, p. 374 ff.

This son is to avenge his father's death. When the lady later visits Muldumarec's kingdom, the lover gives her a ring which will cause her husband to forget her short comings,<sup>94</sup> and a sword which is to be given to their son on a specified occasion. She then returns home and continues to live quietly with her husband until the son, who is born in due time, grows to manhood and is knighted. The three then visit together the lover's kingdom, and the son, on receiving the sword, fulfills his father's prophecy.

This episode, which finds more or less close analogues in the lays of *Tydorel*, *Doon*, *Sire Degarre*, and *Sir Gowther*, can be paralleled in early Irish literature. It will be recalled that in two of the Irish stories summarized above—the *Compert Mongain* and the *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*—the lover, after enjoying the lady's favors, predicts that a son shall be born, and on departing leaves a name for him, in the former account foretelling also his future greatness; but the resemblance in these cases goes no farther. A much more striking parallel is found in the so-called "Second" Battle of Moytura (*Cath maige Turedh*), which, though contained in the fifteenth-century manuscript *Harleian 5280*, pretty certainly belongs to a much earlier period, and may even antedate the tenth century.<sup>95</sup>

Eri, a woman of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, is visited by a fairy lover "of fairest form", who comes to her across the sea in a mysterious vessel. The stranger, after making her his mistress, gives her a gold ring from his middle finger, and he "told her that she should not part with it by sale or by gift, save to one

<sup>94</sup> Miss Rickert compares the *Serglige Conchulainn*, in which the hero, after his separation from his fairy mistress Fand through the jealousy of his mortal wife, is forced by the druids to take a drink of forgetfulness, which causes him to lose all recollection of his amour with the *fée* (*Marie de France, Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 185). On magic rings, see Pietro Toldo, *Rom. Forsch.*, XVI (1904), p. 623 f.

<sup>95</sup> On the possibility of dating the document earlier than the eleventh century, see Alfred Nutt, *Voyage of Bran*, II (1897), p. 173. See further Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, XII (1891), p. 52 f., and d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Les Celtes depuis les Temps les plus anciens*, etc., 1904, p. 41 f. The saga has been ed. and trans. by Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 61 f.

whose finger it should fit". He tells her that he is Elotha, son of Delbaeth, King of the Fomorians, and that she shall bear a wonderful son, whose name shall be called Eochaid Bress. He then departs the way he came. The child is born, and in due time ascends the throne of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, but is deposed for injustice. His mother now finds that the ring fits his finger, and together the two visit the land of the Fomorians, and obtain their assistance against the *Tuatha Dé Danann*. The invaders are, however, defeated in the "Second" Battle of Moytura.

Another Irish tale of great interest in connection with the episode under investigation is the *Aidead Ainfir Aife* (Death of the Only Son of A.), which probably goes back at least to the ninth century.<sup>96</sup> It tells how Cuchulainn, the hero of the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, visits the other world, obtains the favors of Aife, a noted supernatural Amazon, and returns to the land of mortals, leaving her pregnant.<sup>97</sup> [Before departing he gives a name to the child that shall be born].<sup>98</sup> and leaves a ring, with instructions that when it fits the boy's finger, he shall be sent to Ireland to seek his father. This happens, but the son, on reaching Ireland, fights against his father without knowing him, and is slain by Cuchulainn's terrible spear, the *gai bulga*.

The similarity between these two pieces of Celtic tradition and the lay of *Yonec* hardly needs emphasizing. In all three

<sup>96</sup> Ed. and trans. from the *Yellow Book of Lecan* by Kuno Meyer (*Eriu*, I, p. 113 ff.). Cf. edn. by J. G. O'Keeffe (*ibid.*, p. 123 ff.). On the date, see Meyer, *op. cit.* The story is a variant of the well known Sohrab and Rustem theme, on which see M. A. Potter, *Sohrab and Rustem*, London, 1902, pp. 22 ff., 46 ff.

<sup>97</sup> Here, as in the lay of *Doon*, the lover is mortal and the mistress of fairy origin. In both the French and Irish accounts we have the story of a love affair between a mortal and a proud lady who requires severe tests of all her suitors. In both the lover departs, leaving his mistress pregnant, and entrusting her with a ring which is to be bestowed upon their offspring, which will be a boy. In both the son is to seek his father, which in due time happens. In both the recognition takes place during an encounter between father and son.

<sup>98</sup> The bracketed passage is taken from the *Tochmarc Emire* (*Arch. Rev.*, I (1888), p. 302), which refers to Cuchulainn's love affair with Aife.



a being from another world bestows his attentions upon a woman whom, on his departure, he leaves pregnant. He predicts that a son will be born, who (in *Yonec* and the *Cath Maige Turedh*) will be famous. In the Irish accounts the father at the same time gives the boy a name, and entrusts the mother with a ring which is to be bestowed upon the son on a specified occasion. In the lay of *Yonec* the gift of the sword is postponed to a later point in the story. In the *Aidead Ainfr Aife* the son, on the receipt of the ring, is to seek his father, and a similar command is implied in the *Cath Maige Turedh* by the fact that Eochaid Bress visits Elotha's kingdom, making the journey in company with his mother, as also happens in the lay of *Yonec*. The recognition by means of the sword or ring is preserved only in *Sire Degarre*, *Doon* and *Milun*, but it must certainly have existed originally in the *Caith Maige Turedh* and the *Aidead Ainfr Aife*, otherwise the ring and the instructions accompanying it would have no significance. It is therefore probable that it formed part of the original story which was worked into the plot of *Yonec*, but which was at the same time altered to facilitate the introduction of the revenge motive, to be spoken of in a moment. On the basis of the comparisons just made this early form of the story may be reconstructed as follows: A (fairy) lover visits a mortal woman, and on departing predicts that she shall become by him the mother of a wonderful son. The lover also gives the child a name, and leaves with the mother a recognition-token (perhaps a ring), which on a specified occasion is to be delivered to the son, who is then to search for his father in the latter's country, using the gift as a means of identification. This happens. The son is born, in due time receives the gift, and (possibly in company with his mother), seeks his father, and the three are happily united.

Without undertaking the perhaps impossible task of determining where this story had its beginning, we may regard its occur-

rence in Irish literature of a high degree of antiquity<sup>99</sup> and in Breton lays having other points in common with Celtic literature, as an indication that it at least passed through Celtic hands before it influenced the lay of *Yonec*.

#### THE REVENGE MOTIF

In *Yonec* the lady, after returning with the sword and ring from her lover's kingdom, continues to live with her husband until her son is born, grows to manhood, and is knighted. The mother, husband, and son while on a journey to Caerleon, happen to stop in the lover's kingdom at a monastery where the latter is buried. The mother now tells the story of her secret love and gives the sword to her son, who in accordance with his father's prediction at once beheads her husband. The lady falls dead on the tomb of her lover, and the son becomes heir to his father's possessions.

This section of the story bears little similarity to any of the Celtic tales summarized above. In the *Cath Maige Turedh* and the *Aidead Ainifr Aife*, it is true, the son finally visits his father's land, but the results in the two cases differ from each other and from that in the lay of *Yonec*. Stories of revenge are by no means uncommon in early Celtic literature, and it is entirely possible that the revenge motif which forms an important part of the final episode of *Yonec*, got attached to the story before it passed out of Celtic hands. It is, however, found in none of the modern versions of the tale of the bird-lover,<sup>100</sup> a fact which speaks somewhat against its having belonged to the story at a very early date.

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<sup>99</sup> Alfred Nutt argues for the existence among both the Goidelic and Brythonic Celts of the British Isles, of a "tale of a wonder-child, begotten upon a mortal mother by a supernatural father:" *Voyage of Bran*, I (1895), p. 28; cf. F. L. Ravenel, *Publins. of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, XX (1905), p. 166. On the ancient Gaulish belief in supernatural birth, see Camille Jullian, *Recherches sur la Religion Gauloise* (*Bibl. des Universités du Midi*, Fascicule VI), Bordeaux, 1903, p. 93.

<sup>100</sup> See Miss Rickert, *Marie de France, Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 186.

It should also be observed that this part of the lay bears no such indications of other-worldness as marked the heroine's first visit to Muldumarec's kingdom.<sup>101</sup> The journey is made on horseback, and is apparently of considerable extent, for the party stop to rest at a monastery, where the lover happens to be buried. Here the closing scene very appropriately takes place. The whole proceeding is quite in accordance with possible human experience, and may be, as Miss Rickert suggests, merely "a human story of murder and vengeance"<sup>102</sup> blended with the preceding episode, which, as we have seen above, perhaps told how the son set out with his token to seek his supernatural father.

#### CONCLUSION

This discussion brings out the following facts. 1) There existed in early Celtic literature a type of story in which a supernatural lover visits the land of mortals, appears in the form of a bird to a mortal wife, forms a union with her, is discovered by the aggrieved husband, and is wounded or slain. 2) In another type the fairy lover, after making the woman his mistress, departs, first predicting that she shall bear a famous son, giving the child a name, and leaving with the mother a ring or other token to be bestowed upon him on a specified occasion. The son is then to seek his father in the latter's kingdom. This happens, and the son is recognized by the token. 3) In still another type of story the woman is carried off to the other-world by her fairy lover. If we combine these three under the influence of the *Inclusa* motif, introducing the device of the barbed irons as a means of wounding the lover, the result would agree pretty closely with the plot of Marie's lay, minus the revenge motif. The death of the lover (as in *type 1*), and the birth of a son (as in *type 2*), would naturally suggest the addition of this feature. The lover's gift to his mistress, whose visit

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Ahlström, *Studier i den fornfranska Laislitteraturen*, 1892, p. 92.

<sup>102</sup> *Marie de France, Seven of her Lays*, 1901, p. 186. Cf. Ahlström, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

to his kingdom may be taken from *type 3*, then naturally becomes a sword with which the son is to revenge his father's death, and the ring, when proper virtues are attributed to it, may be used in quieting the jealous husband, with whom Marie, and doubtless many who had told the story before her, had little sympathy.

These observations are made in the full realization that several features in the lay of *Yonac* which have been paralleled in early Celtic literature, are to be met with also in Classical or Oriental tradition, or elsewhere. The evidence in favor of Celtic origin is of a cumulative nature, and its value rests, not on this or that feature common to Celtic tradition and the lay of *Yonac*, but on a series or combination of features, and the peculiar way in which they are treated.

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